

OF THE
Unity of the Church

A III 3261



DISCOURSE WRITTEN

*A Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty
Years Since,*

In the time of Decius the Persecuting Emperor.

By

CYPRIAN

Bishop of Carthage and Martyr.

Most usefull for allaying the present heats,
and reconciling the differences
among us.

Printed at the THEATER in Oxford. 1681.

C63145

1985 June 13

Gifts

Prof. C. C. Collier,
Salerno.

To the R E A D E R.

WHent the Idolatrous violence of heathen Rome, under the Emperor Decius, attempted the extirpation of the Christian Faith, and brought on the seventh bloody persecution: Novatian a Presbyter of the Roman Church separated himself from the communion thereof, and became leader of a dangerous schism, upon suggestion that others were polluted by the conversation of ungodly men, and favoured those who were Idolatrous: reproching them with the titles of Apostats, Idolators and Jews, as Pacian informs us. Which most unseasonable rupture, exceedingly weakned the hands of the Orthodox Christians, and, as S. Cyprian expresses it, became another persecution unto them. In this unhappy state of affairs, when Idolatry destroyed from abroad with all possible violence, and Schism divided with like heat and earnestness within; the good bishop of Carthage S. Cyprian, thought it lay upon him, (for the privilege of the pope of Rome had not then placed his Church above admonition; nor his infallibility set it beyond instruction) to endeavor the reducing the dissenters in that Church: whose godly labors had very great effect, bringing back into communion, several of the most eminent partizans in Schism; and thereby many others also, who by large pretences to godliness, and the name of some pious men drawn aside into the party, gave reputation to it.

I need not say how parallel a case we have in the Church of England. When we are now assaulted by the plots and machinations of Idolatrous Rome, we are molested by domestic

To the Reader.

meſtic diſſentions from within, upon the ſame pretences that we are polluted with the converſation of the Ungodly, and favor thoſe who are Idolators; are lukewarm Profeſſors, Popiſhly affected, and proteſtants in Maſquerade. It would be moſt happy if the parallel could be advanc'd yet farther; and that as the advices of the holy Biſhop and Martyr S. Cyprian were efficacious heretofore, they may again be ſo on the like occaſion. He being dead, above fourteen hundred years ſince, yet ſpeaketh; and his diſcourſes cannot be imagin'd to be leavened by intereſt or paſſion; and therefore they are faithfully tranſlated into our Engliſh tongue; and preſented to the view and conſideration of Diſſenters among us.

The Chriſtian Church ſtands under the ſame terms of duty to God and man, as heretofore it did; we have as ſtrict obligation to Unity among our ſelves, & Obedience to thoſe who are over us in the Lord, as had our firſt forerunners in the faith. We are as forcibly bound to join in the ſame public Worſhip as they were; and Excommunication, (eſpecially that which the Schiſmatic voluntarily executes upon himſelf) will be as penal, and as certain a prejudice of the judgment of the great day, as it was eſteem'd in the primitive Church, and 'tis declar'd to be by Tertulian. And not only the guilt, but alſo the danger of Diſviſion, is now as great as it was ever heretofore; according to the ſaying of S. Paul, If we bite and devour one another, we ſhall be deſtroied one of another. God Almighty grant that we may ſee, at leaſt in this our day, the things belonging to our peace, before they be hid from our Eyes.


T H E

Holy Martyr

S. C Y P R I A N

Of the Unity of the Church.

Written in
the 251 year
after Christ.


 HERE AS our Lord instructing us hath said, *You are the salt of the earth*; and commanded us to be *simple* as to the doing any wrong, and yet withall to join wisdom with our simplicity; what can be more fit and becoming us, then that with watchfull diligence we should endeavour to understand, both what are the ambushes of our crafty enemy, and how to avoid them? that we who have put on *Christ the Wisdom of God the Father*, may not seem destitute of wisdom in securing our salvation: for we are not only to fear that persecution, which by open force attempts the overthrow of the servants of God. Tis easie to be cautious where the hazard is manifest. The mind is prepared before for the combat, where

B

Prudence & obedience are to be joined to Christian simplicity.
 Mat. 5. 13.
 10. 16.
 1 Cor. 1. 24.

the

the enemy professes himself. Then is he most formidable and most to be took care of, when he secretly approaches, and under a fraudulent pretence of peace, by an undiscernible motion steals upon us insensibly; from the practice of which methods the Devil has the name of Serpent: for such hath bin always his craft, and so dark and concealed from all view is the fraud by which he circumvents the sons of men. Thus in the infancy of the world he enterprized upon, and by mixing flattery with lies, he deceived our unexperienced Forefathers thro their unwary credulity. Thus when he attempted our Lord, he secretly approached, as if by stealth he meant to deceive him: but he was immediatly understood, and as soon repulsed and vanquish'd, because he was discoverd and known. Whence we may learn to decline the path of the first Adam, and pursue the steps of Christ the victorious, that we may not again unawares be entangled in the snare of Death; but being provident against danger, we may at last enjoy the purchased immortality. But how can we attain the fruition of this immortality, unless we keep those commands of Christ by which death is to be vanquish'd and subdued? according to that counsel and saying of his:

If

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. And again: *Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you.* Such who are thus minded and resolved, he stiles the couragious and stable, *founded upon a rock* of vast bulk and strength, firmly compacted and consolidated by an unshaken immovable constancy, against all the storms and tempests of the world. *Whosoever heareth, saith he, these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not, because it was founded upon a rock.* It is our duty therefore to regulate our goings by his precepts, and to learn and do the things he taught and did: for with what face can any one profess he believes in Christ, while he neglects to do what he enjoyns to be don? or expect to reap the reward of faith, who is unfaithful in the observation of his commands? It cannot be, but such a one must stagger, and wander to and fro, being hurried about by the spirit of error, like dust driven by the wind. Nor shall he by his walking forward ever reach salvation, who keeps not the saving way of truth.

Mat. 19. 17.

John 15. 14.

Mat. 7. 24.
and 25.

*Heresies are
most careful-
ly to be avoid-
ed.*

Luke 2. 32.

Math. 11. 5.

But we must not only take care to decline the Devils more obvious and manifest attempts; but those which his subtile craft and fraud hath laid in the dark, the more easily to entrap us. For what artifice more fine, what nicer subtilty, then that when this enemy found himself discoverd and defeated by Christ's coming into the world (after this *light* appeared to the *Gentiles*, after he broke forth with healing rays for the curing and saving mankind, making the deaf hear the words of spiritual grace, the blind lift up their eyes to God, the weak recover to everlasting life, the lame run into the bosome of the Church, the dumb loudly and distinctly pray to God,) when he beheld the abandoning of his Idols, and that his Temples and Houses of superstition were left desolate and empty, by the very great numbers that went off from his worship, and embrac'd the Faith: then to set on foot a new artifice, even under the very title and name of Christianity to entrap the unwary? He invented Heresies and Schisms to undermine the Faith, adulterate the Truth, and divide Unity it self. Those whom he cannot detain in the darkness of the old way, he circumvents by leading them in new and erroneous paths. Thus he siezes and takes
men

men out of the Church, and while they imagine with themselves that they have made nearer approaches to light, and left behind them the Night of the world, he insensibly involves them anew in thick darkness; that not conforming themselves to the Gospel of Christ, and the observation of his righteous laws, and yet calling themselves Christians, and walking in darkness, they should notwithstanding persuade themselves that they were illuminated. The adversary flattering them in this opinion, and so beguiling them; who according to the Apostle, *transforms himself into an Angel of light*, and dresses up his *ministers* as if they were the *servants of righteousness*: so that they miscalling night day, ruine and destruction safety and salvation, obtruding despair under the name of hope, pretending infidelity to be faith, setting up Antichrist for Christ; suggesting false but seeming probabilities, frustrate the truth by subtilty.

² Cor. II. 14,
and 15.

This comes to pass, my well-beloved Brethren, while we have not recourse to the source and original of truth; while we seek not for the head and Fountain, and are inobservant of our heavenly masters doctrine, which if well weighed and examined, would supersede long discourses and arguments. Truth renders

The original of Heresie is the ignorance of the Holy Scripture, and content of the Unity of the Church.

the proof of our faith easie and compendious. Our Lord speaking to Peter, useth these words:

Mat. 16.
18, & 19.

And I also say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. And he said unto the same person after his resurrection:

Jo. 21. 17.

Feed my sheep. And altho after his resurrection he invested all the Apostles with equal power,

Jo. 20. 21.

22, 23.

and told them all: As the Father hath sent me, so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye do retain, they are retained; yet that he might make manifest the Churches Unity, his Authority so order'd it, that the origination thereof should be expres'd by the mention first of one single Person. What Peter was, that also were the rest of the Apostles, they having a like participation of honor and power; yet the narration begins with Unity, to signifie that the Church can be but one. This Unity of the Church the holy Spirit designes in the Canticles, when in the person of our Lord he thus speaks: *My dove, my*

Cant. 6. 8.

undefiled

*filed is but one : she is the only one of her mother :
she is the choice one of her that bare her.*

Now can he who keeps not this Unity of the Church, perswade himself that he holds fast the Faith? can he who contends with the Church and opposeth her, have the confidence to imagin himself a member of the Church; when the blessed Apostle Paul declares, and points clearly at the mystery of Unity, saying: *There is one body, and one Spirit, one* Schism readily passes into Heresie. Eph. 4. 4, 5.

hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism? Which unity we Bishops, especially, who preside in the Church, ought firmly to maintain and defend; that we may evidence thereby the unity and individualness of Episcopacy it self. Let none decieve the brethren with a ly, or corrupt the truth of our faith with perfidious prevarication. There is but one Episcopacy, which tho shared among as many severall persons as there are Bishops in the Christian world, yet each possesseth the authority entire. There is also but one Church, however her fruitfulness and growth is such, that she spreads and increaseth to a multitude of particular churches. As the beams which issue from the Sun are many, and yet the light it creates by them is one and the same: or as the boughs
growing

growing out of a tree are many, and yet is it but one stock, fastned and fixt to it's place by one tenacious root: So too, when many rivulets flow from a fountain, whereby it seems so encreased as to become many by the plenty of water, which is such as to require several channels for it's conveyance; yet 'tis but one water still, because it all rises at, and runs from one spring head. Intercept a sun-beam from the body of the sun, the onefs of light will not admit of division. If you break a bough from a tree, 'twill never shoot forth or grow again. Cut off a river from it's fountain, 'twill immediatly dry up. In like manner the Church being enlightned by our Lord, extends it's beams thro the whole world; yet is it the same light that every where appears, and is entirely one however scatter'd: As a tree, she spreads her branches, luxuriant in growth, and plenteous in fruit. And as a river enlarges by her course her swelling streams, yet is there but one head, one source, one stock, of all this happy plenty.

*Out of the
Church there
is no Salva-
tion.*

We are all the fruit of the Churches womb, nourisht with the milk of her breasts, quickned by her spirit. The spouse of Christ cannot be deflour'd, but continues chaste and incorrupt.
She

She is acquainted but with one house, and by a modest shamefacedness secures the reputation of the marriage bed. Tis she who preserves us unto God, and leads her children to a kingdom. Whosoever departs from the Church, joins himself to an harlot, and forfeits the promises made unto her ; nor can he attain the rewards of Christ, who abandons his Church ; such a one is an Alien, is profane, is an Enemy. He cannot have God for his Father, who disowns the Church for his Mother. If any one escaped in the Flood, who was out of Noah's ark, he may likewise be saved, who is out of the pale of the Church. Our Lord informs us of this, saying: *He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.* He who breaks the peace and agreement of the Church, sets himself against Christ. He who gathers and makes proselytes out of the Church, scatters and makes havock of it. It's our Lord's saying: *I and my Father are one.* And Joh. 10. 30. again it's written concerning the Father, Son, and holy Spirit: *These three are one.* 1 Joh. 5. 7. And now can any one believe that this unity, which proceeds from the Divine immutability and is consolidated by heavenly mysteries, can

be rent asunder in the Church, and divided into parts by the discrepancy of the jarring wills of men? He who keeps not this unity, holds not the law of God, nor the belief of the Father and the Son, nor the faith by which he should be saved.

*The unity of
the Church is
expressed by
our Saviours
seamless
coat.*

This Sacrament of unity, this indissoluble band of concord is represented to us in the Gospel by the coat of Christ, which was not divided at all or parted, but the soldiers casting lots upon his vesture, who among them should wear it, it remain'd whole and entire. The scripture

John 19. 23.
and 24.

The soldiers said among themselves, concerning this coat without seam, woven from the top throout, Let us not divide it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be. That garment represented the unity which descended from above, that is from heaven and the Father, which was not to be torn and cut by any who became possessor of it, but he was to have a firm and entire possession thereof. He cannot have the garment of Christ, who rends and tears his Church. So upon the other side, when after the death of Solomon, the Prophet Ahijah met with King Jeroboam on the way, he rent the garment he had upon him into twelve pieces, saying to him: *Take thee ten pieces; for thus saith the*

1 Kings 11.
29, 30, &c.

Lord

Lord God of Israel : Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and I will give ten tribes to thee. But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put my name there. Thus when the twelve tribes of Israel were to be rent asunder, the Prophet Ahijah prefignified it by rending Jeroboam's garment. But because Christ's people cannot be torn in sunder, therefore his coat which was wove throout and of an entire piece, was not parted and shared by the souldiers, whose fee it was. It's being undivided, and the parts of it being closely and imperceptibly conjoyned, is a mysterious emblem of that concord and union which ought to be between all who have put on Christ.

What person therefore can be so impious, *If Christs garment will not brook division, much less his body.* so perfidious, so raging mad with discord, as to imagin he can compass, or dare to attempt the rending the unity of the Godhead, the garment of the Lord, or Church of Christ? He himself hath instructed us in his Gospel saying, that *there shall be one fold, and one shepberd.* Joh. 10. 16. And can any one imagin that in one fold there should be many shepherds, or many flocks?

The Apostle Saint Paul recommending to us
 1 Cor. 1. 10. this unity, intreats and exhorts, saying: *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speake the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joind together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.* And again he
 Eph. 4. 2, 3. *saith: Forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* Can it be thought that any one departing from the Church, can subsist and live, the man who raises new fabrics for himself: when it was told Rahab, by whose house the
 Josh. 2. 18, 19. *Church was prefigur'd, Thou shalt bring thy Father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy Fathers house home unto thee; and it shall be whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head: and the Sacrament of the passover instituted in Exodus contains no other lesson then this, that the Lamb (the slaying of which prefigured Christ's death) should be eaten in one house? The Lord enjoyn'd that it should be*
 Exod. 12. 11. *eaten in one House, and that nothing of it should be carried abroad. The flesh of Christ, the Holy of the Lord, is not to be cast out of doors: nor have Believers any other house*
 be-

besides the Church which is but one. The holy Ghost in the Psalms designs and expresses this house, this lodging of unanimity, when he saith: *It is God who maketh men to be of one mind in an house.* In the house of God, in the Church of Christ the loving inhabit, the kind and simple continue therein. Psal. 68. 6.

Therefore the holy Spirit appear'd in the shape of a dove, that innocent gentle creature, which is not imbitter'd with gall, bites not fiercely with teeth, nor violently tears with talons: These creatures love the places where men dwell, keep to the same nest, both the mates hatch their young; when they fly abroad, they go in flocks, they pass their age in mutual converse; in their billing together, they express in a manner the kiss of Charity, and in all points fulfil the law of unanimity. This simplicity is to be sought after in the Church, this charity to be acquir'd, that our brotherly love may imitate that of doves, our mildness and gentleness equal that of sheep and lambs. *The Dove and Lamb are the emblems of christianity.* What hath the fierceness of wolves, the madness of dogs, the deadly venom of serpents, and the cruelty of savage beasts to do with a Christian's breast? We are to rejoyce, when such are cut off from the communion of the

Church; least they devour the doves and sheep of Christ, or poyson them with their infectious contagion. Sweet and bitter cannot incorporate or dwell together; neither can darkness and light, rain and sunshine, war and peace, dearth and plenty, drought and moisture, tranquillity and tempest.

*Heresy is a
work of the
flesh; and in-
vades not the
truly good.*

1 Jo. 2. 19.

It is not possible for the truly good to depart from the Church. The wind carries not away the good corn; nor doth a tempest throw down the well rooted tree. It's the light chaff which the wind drives about, and the decayed stock which the storm blows down. These are they whom the Apostle John execrates and smites, saying: *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* Hence heresies have frequently been, and still arise, while the perverse mind retains not peace, and perfidious discord abandons unity. Which things the Lord permits and suffers, leaving to men their liberty of will.; that when our hearts and minds are tried by this test of truth, the integrity of the faithful may be as manifest as the light. The Holy Spirit warns us of this by the Apostle, telling us: *that heresies must be, that the approved might be made*

made manifest. By this the faithful are tried, ^{1 Cor. 11.} and the perfidious detected; so that even here ^{19.} before the day of Judgment, there passeth a discrimination between the just and unjust, and the chaff is separated from the good grain.

These are they who of their own heads ^{*The character of heretics.*} without any warrant from the Divine appointment, set themselves over the giddy conventiclers; who without the requisite of Ordination, constitute themselves governours; and assume to themselves the character of Bishops, without having that office & authority conferred upon them. Whom the holy Ghost in the book of Psalms points at, when he mentions those who *sit in the seat of the scornfull*: they ^{Ps. 1. 1.} are the very pest and bane of faith, decieving with their serpentine glosings, skilfull in adulterating the truth, spitting up deadly poyson from their pestilential tongues. Whose very words *spred like a canker*, whose discourses ^{2 Tim. 2. 17.} distill poyson into the breast and heart. 'Tis against these the Lord lifts up his voice, it is from these he restrains and calls back his wandering flock, saying: *Hearken not unto the words of the prophets, that prophesy unto you; they make you vain: they speake a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.*

They

^{Jerem. 23.}
^{16, 17.}

ver. 22.

They say still unto them that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace, and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. If they had continued in my way, and hearkned to my words, and had from them instructed my people; I would have turned them from their evil thoughts.

Jer. 2. 13:

These same persons the Lord designs and marks out again, saying: They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Altho there is but one baptism, they presume they may baptize. Having left the fountain of life, they promise baptismal grace, whereby they who are immerst are not cleansed but defiled; their sins not put away but rather multiplied: that new birth begets not sons to God but to the Devil. Being born of a ly, they are not capable of the promises of truth: begot in perfidiousness, they lose the grace of faith. They cannot receive the reward of peace, who by their mad discord have broke the Lords peace.

The promise of our Savior that he will be in the midst of two or three who are gathered together in his name, belongs not to the separate from the congregation.

Mat. 18. 20.

Nor let any decieve themselves with a false exposition of what the Lord hath said: *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* These cor-

rupters

rupters of the Gospel, and false interpreters of it, produce the last clause, and pass over the antecedent parts of the discourse; remembering one piece of it, and craftily forgetting the other. As they themselves are divided from the Church; so likewise they divide asunder an entire period of the Scripture. For when our Lord advised his disciples to unanimity and peace, he thus addrest to them: *I* lb. v. 19, 20. *say unto you, that if two shall agree upon earth, as touching anything they shall ask; it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven: for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;* shewing thereby that the success and force of prayer was not to be imputed to the number of supplicants, but unanimity of them. *If two of you, saith he, shall agree upon earth,* he placed unanimity in the front, and began with the agreement of peace, that he might instruct us to agree faithfully and firmly together. But how can he agree with any one, who agrees not with the body of the Church, and the brotherhood in general? How can two or three be gathered together in Christs name, who apparently are separated from Christ and his Gospel? For we did not go out from them,

but they departed from us. And whereas herefies and schifms had their birth and original from mens making of diftinct conventicles for themfelves, tis they who are defertors of the head from whence truth takes it's original. But the Lord fpeaks there concerning the Church, and fpeaks to them who are of it and in it; that if they fhall according to his command and counfel, unanimoufly joyn in prayer, tho they be but two or three gather'd together, yet they fhall obtain from the Divine Majefty a grant

Mat. 18. 20. of what they ask. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I*, faith he, *in the midft of them*: i. e. of fuch who are fimple and peaceable, who fear God and keep his commands. In the midft of thefe, tho but two or three, he promifed he would be.

Dan. 3. 25. After this fort he was with the three Children in the fiery furnace; and becaufe they kept their fimplicity towards him, and continued in unanimity with one another; he therefore refrefht them, amidft the flames, as it were with a cooling breath of air, or the falling of dew: He was with the two Apoftles, fhut up in prifon; forasmuch as they were fimple, forasmuch as they were unanimous. He opened the prifon gates, and brought them into the court

court of the temple, that they might declare that word, they had before faithfully preached, to the multitude. When therefore he commands and saies, that *wheresoever two or three are gatherd together in my name, I am in the midst of them*; he who founded and instituted the Church, doth not divide men from it: but upbraiding the discord of the unfaithful, and recommending with his own mouth peace to the faithful, he thence declares, he will rather afford his presence to two or three who are met together with one heart and one mind in prayer, then to very many dissenters; and that more may be obtain'd by the prayer of a few who agree in what they ask, then by the supplication of many, whose very petitions as well as themselves are at variance against each other. Upon which account, when he gave a rule of prayer to his disciples, he added: *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses.* Nay he calls back the person who designs him a sacrifice, from the very altar, if he comes thither having a difference with his brother, and bids him first to be reconciled to his brother, and then to come again in peace, and offer his gift;

Mat. 18. 20.

Mark 11. 25.

Mat. 5. 23.

Gen. 4. 5. for upon this ground God had not respect to the offering of Cain. For God could not be reconciled to him, who thro envy, hated his brother.

*Martyrdom
it self cannot
atone for the
sin of
Schisme.*

What peace therefore can they expect who are at enmity with their brethren? What oblations can they offer who strive with the Priest? Can they think Christ will vouchsafe to be in the midst of them when they are gathered together, whose meeting is without the Church? Such if slain for the confessing of Christ, would not wash away their sin even with their blood. The heinous and inexpiable crime of discord is not to be purg'd away, no not with death. He cannot be a Martyr, who is not in the Church: nor can he ever come to the kingdom of Christ triumphant, who here deserts it being militant. Our Lord left us peace for a legacy, commanded unanimity unto us, and gave in charge that we should *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* He cannot be a martyr, who is destitute of brotherly love. Saint Paul both

1 Cor. 13. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. *teacheth and contests this, saying: Altho I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And tho I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and tho I give*

give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing. Charity suffers long, and is kind: charity envieth not: charity vaunts not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things: charity never faileth. This shall continue in that kingdom we look for, this shall remain to all eternity in the brotherhood and never to be divided union of glorified saints. Discord cannot enter heaven nor receive rewards from Christ, who has declar'd to his disciples: *This is my commandment, that* John 15. 12. *ye love one another, even as I have loved you.* He can have no relation to him who violates his love by perfidious dissention. Whoever hath not charity, hath not God. It's the blessed Apostle John's assertion: for he saith: *God* 1 John 4. *is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* 16. They cannot dwell with God who thro dissention will not abide in his Church. Tho they fry in flames, tho cast into the fire or to wild beasts, they lay down their lives, therein they receive not the crown of faith, but the reward of disobedience; not the glorious exit of religious fortitude, but

the final destruction of despair. Such a one may be killed, but cannot be crown'd.

They are only Christians in name, who do not maintain brotherly love.

Mark 12. 6.

The schismatic assumes the Christian name no otherwise then the Devil do's, when he counterfietts Christ; according as he forewarn'd us, saying: *Many shall come in my name, saying: I am Christ, and shall decieve many.* Now as Satan is not Christ, tho he falsly takes his name; so neither is he to be lookt upon as a Christian, who perseveres not in the truth of his Gospel, and faith thereof. It is indeed a sublime and wonderful privilege to prophesy, cast out Devils, and to perform on earth works of power. And yet whosoever he be who hath these gifts, doth not thereby attain to the Kingdom of heaven, unless he tread in the strait and even path of duty. The Lord hath pronounced such a one's doom in these

Mat. 7. 22,

23.

words: Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out Devils? and in thy name don many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. 'Tis righteousness alone that can recommend us to God when he comes to judgment. We must obey his commands and counsels, that the good works which

which we have don may be rewarded. Our Lord in the Gospel, when he would guide the progress of our faith and hope in the shortest track, tells us: *The Lord thy God is one.*

And, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.* *This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Mat. 22.

37, 38, 39,

40.

In his instruction he joyns together love and unity; and in two precepts comprised the Law and the Prophets. But how doth he retain unity, or preserve love, or so much as think on't, who furiously mad with the poyson of discord, mangles the Church, destroyeth the faith, disturbs the peace, dissipates charity and profanes all holy mysteries.

This mischief, my beloved Brethren, began long since, but now the destruction occasion'd thereby, is apparently increased; and the poysonous bane of heretical perverseness and separation hath shot up and shews it self. For the holy Spirit foretelling & admonishing us by the Apostle, declares that in the declination of the world it was necessary so it should be. *In the last days, saith he, perilous times shall come.*

The Apostles have long before foretold, the rise of Schismes in the Church.

2 Tim. 3. 1,

2, 3, 4, 5, 6,

7, 8.

men

men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more then lovers of God, having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof. Of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses; so do these also resist the truth. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be made manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. What hath been foretold, hath been exactly fulfill'd, and the world now drawing to an end, the times and men are a proof thereof. The adversary now raging more and more, in like proportions error decieves, stupidity thrusts forward, envy enflames, avarice blinds, impiety depraves, pride puffs up, discord provokes, anger transports. Yet notwithstanding all this, the abounding of iniquity ought not to shake and disturb us, but rather the truth of the prediction ought to confirm and strengthen our faith. Therefore should the brethren
rather

rather take heed of such, for that all things were foretold of them: our Lord himself teaching us and saying: *But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.* Avoid I beseech you such men, and walk not with them, and keep your ears shut, and your selves far from their infectious communication, which carrieth death along with it, as it is written; *Set an hedge of thorns about thine ears, and hearken not to an evil tongue.* And again: *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* The Lord instructs and counsels us to withdraw from this sort of persons: *They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.* Whoever he is that lives in separation from the Church, he is to be detested and shunn'd. *He who is such, is perverted and sinneth, being condemn'd of himself.* Can he concieve himself to be on Christ's side, who acts against his Priests, who departs from the communion of his Clergy and people? Such a one bears arms against the Church, against God's ordinance, is an enemy to the altar, a rebel against the sacrifice of Christ, instead of being faithful is a traitor, instead of religious sacrilegious, an undutiful son, an ungodly servant, an hostile brother;

E contemning

Mark 13.
23.

Ecclef. 28.
28. according to the
Vulg. Lat.
1 Cor. 15.
33.
Mat. 15. 14.

Tit. 3. 11.

contemning the Bishops and renouncing God's priests, he presumtuously sets up altar against altar, makes new and unlawful praier, profanes by false sacrifices the true offering of our Lord; not deigning to consider, that *they* who resist the ordinance of God, recieve to themselves damnation.

Rom. 13. 2.

Gods vengeance pursues the invaders of the priest-hood.

Numb. 16.

32.

Ibid. 35.

2 Chron.
26. 16. &c.

Thus Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, who challeng'd to themselves the power of sacrificing in opposition to Moses, and Aaron the priest, were immediately punish't for their attempt. *The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up.* Nor did the Anger of God thus stirr'd up punish only the authors of this rebellion, but two hundred and fifty others, complices in their seditious enterprise: who joyning themselves to them in their insolence, were with a speedy revenge *consumed by fire from the Lord.* From whence we learn and are taught, that whatever wicked men do in opposition to Gods ordinance, is don against him. So King Uzziah, taking a censer in his hand to burn incense contrary to the law of God, violently invading the priesthood, and refusing to obey and retire when Azariah the priest oppos'd his design, was by divine vengeance put to shame, being markt

markt in the forehead with the stein of Leprosy. The offended Lord set the mark of his anger on that conspicuous part of his body, where they are sign'd who are reciev'd into his favor. So likewise the sons of Aaron for offering up strange fire to the Lord, which he commanded not, were forthwith consumed before the Lord in his displeasure; and yet these are imitated and followed by all such, who slighting what was delivered by God, seek after and are in love with doctrines of human invention: for which crime our Lord in his Gospel sharply rebukes and reprooves them: *Ye transgress and make the commandment of God of none effect, by your tradition.* Lev. 10. 1. Mat. 15. 3. and 6.

This is a more flagitious wickedness then that which the Lapsed commit, who being reciev'd to Penance, by acts of mortification recommend themselves to the mercy of God. In this case the Church is sought to, in the other she is oppos'd: in this there might be some pretence of necessity, in that the crime is purely voluntary: here the lapsed person prejudiceth himself alone; there who so profelytes others to schism or heresy, decieves as many as he draws in: here is the loss of one soul, there the danger of many. This is plain,

The Schismatic is more criminal then the lapsed person, whose guilt even Martyrdom cannot expiate.

the lapsed understands he hath offended, and mourns and bewails his condition ; but the sectary is puffed up in his sin, and pleaseth himself in his transgression ; he parts the mother and her children, whom he draws off from her ; he enticeth the sheep to follow his voice and not the shepherds ; and, in short, disorders Gods sacraments. And whereas the Lapsed person sin'd but once, the persevering schismatic goes on in daily sinning. To conclude, the lapsed recovering his station, may be honour'd now with the crown of Martyrdom, and may hereafter were a Heavenly one ; while the schismatic flain out of the Church, can never recieve those rewards which are peculiarly hers.

*It is not to be
wonder'd at,
if Confessors
fall into
Schism.*

And here, my beloved Brethren, let it be no wonder to any of you that Confessors fall into schism ; and that some of that rank may be guilty of crimes so heinous as not to be mention'd. For it is not the confessing of Christs name which privileges a man from the Devils snares, or which defends and perpetually safeguards one while in this world : for if it were so, we should never meet with deceit, uncleanness, and adultery in Confessors, and yet these are crimes which to our grief and sadness we see

see in some. Whosoever that Confessor be, he is not greater, nor better, nor dearer to God then Solomon, who yet held that grace he once obtain'd of the Lord, so long only as he walkt in his ways: But after he forsook his way, he lost his favor also, as it is written: *The Lord rais'd up an adversary against him.* 1 Kings 11. 14. Revel. 3. 11. And therefore it is said: *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.* Which threat had not bin menaced, were it not that upon departing from righteousness, the crown likewise was to be translated. Confession is the first setting out towards glory, but carries not the prize: perfects not praise, tho it initiate to honor: as it is written: *He who endureth to the end, he shall be saved.* Mat. 10. 22. Whatsoever is before the end, may be a step to ascend by to the height of salvation, but it is not that last round which seats us in the utmost summity thereof. By being a Confessor, one becomes afterwards in greater danger, because it gives greater provocation to the enemy. Is any one a Confessor, for this very reason he ought to keep close to the Gospel of our Lord, having by the Gospel obtain'd glory from him. For he has said: *To whom much is given, of him much shall be required;* and the higher a person stands Luke 12. 48. rais'd

rais'd in dignity, the more service shall be demanded of him. Let no man perish by the example of a Confessor, nor any one learn injustice, pride, faithlesnes from a Confessors ill morals. Is any one a Confessor, let him be humble and quiet, let him in his conversation be orderly and modest; and as he is call'd the Confessor of Christ, let him imitate that Christ whom he has confest. For when he saith:

Luke 18.14. *Every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted,* and was himself exalted by his father, because being the word, the power, the wisdom of God the Father, he humbled himself here upon earth; how can it be that he should love a proud advancing of our selves, who both himself requir'd humility in his law, and reciev'd from his father a name above all names as a recompence of his humility? A Confessor he is of Christs; but upon this condition, that he doth not afterward blaspheme Christs Majesty and Glory. The tongue which hath once confess'd Christ, ought not to rail, or be turbulent; should not be heard making a noise in reproches and wrangling; nor having set forth the divine praises, spit out serpentine venom against the Brethren and Priests of God.

But

But if the Confessor shall grow criminal and detestable afterwards, if he shall overthrow his good confession by an ill conversation, if with some filthy action he shall bring a foul blot upon his life, if lastly forsaking that Church in which he became a Confessor, and cutting asunder the band of Unity, he shall exchange his first faith for infidelity at the last, he is not to flatter himself as if his confession made him one of the Elect, and to be rewarded with Glory; when hereby he deserves the severer punishment. Our Lord chose Judas to be an Apostle, and yet this Judas betray'd afterwards his Lord.

But albeit the traitor Judas fell off from the fellowship of the Apostles, yet was not this an impeachment of their fidelity and duty; and so here in the present affair, it doth not lessen the dignity of Confessors, because the faith of some hath faild. The blessed Apostle speaks to this purpose: *For what if some have not believ'd, (or fallen away) shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? let God be true, and every man a liar.* The better and greater part of Confessors stands firm in the faith and in the truth of the Lords law and discipline. Nor do they depart from the Churches peace, who
The falling away of some, do's not lessen the glory of those Confessors, who retain their dignity.
Rom. 3. 3. 4.
keep

keep in mind that it was in the Church where thro the mercy of God they obtain'd grace : And in this respect their faith is more to be commended, that they withdrew from a fellowship with them in schism, with whom they had bin join'd in an unconquerable confession : who withdrew from the contagion of guilt, being irradiated with the true Gospel light, shin'd upon by the pure and bright beams of the Lord ; as much to be renown'd for keeping Christs peace, as they were for their conquest in their conflict with the Devil.

The conversion of schismatics is to be avoided.

I wish, my beloved Brethren, and withal give my counsel and advice, that if it be possible, not one of the Brethren may perish, and our joyful mother the Church may recieve into her bosom the whole body of agreeing people. But if notwithstanding her wholesome counsel, she cannot recall back some of the chief ringleaders of schism and authors of dissenti-on, obstinately resolv'd to persist in their blind madness, into the way of salvation ; yet let the rest of you who have been caught by simplicity, or led by mistake, or beguil'd by the cunning craft and cozenage of others, disentangle yourselves from the deceitful snares, retrieve your wandering feet out of the by-paths of error, and
take

take the straight way which leads to heaven. It is the Apostles adjuration: *Now we command* ^{2 Thel. 3. 6.} *you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he reciev'd of us.* And again he speaks to this sense: *Let no man decieve you with* ^{Eph. 5. 6. 7.} *vain words. For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Therefore be not partakers with them.* We must therefore depart from such offenders as these, nay rather we ought to fly from them, for fear least if one join himself to such disorderly walkers, and goes with them in their ways of sin, wandring from the track where the true road lay, he may at last be involv'd in an equal share of guilt with them. There is one God and one Christ, his Church one, his faith one, and his people by concord are firmly cemented together into one body. Unity is not to be divided, nor can the same body by the dissolution of its contexture be dissever'd from its self, or subsist, having its bowels torn out piece-meal. Whatever infant is cut off from the womb, cannot live and breath apart, but looseth its safety and life. It is the holy Spirits admonition: *What man is he* ^{Psal. 34. 12.} *that desireth life, & loveth many days that he may see* ^{13. 14.} *good?*

good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it. He who is a son of peace, ought to seek and follow after it, and he who is acquainted with, and hath any affection for the bond of charity, ought to refrain his tongue from evil dissention. To the rest of the divine precepts of wholesome instruction which our Lord being about to suffer

Jo. 14. 27. *dispensed, he added this: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.* This legacy of peace he left us, and hath promised us all the gifts, all the rewards he hath to bestow, on condition we preserve it. If we are coheirs with Christ, let us abide with Christ in peace: If sons of God, we should be peacemakers.

Mat. 5. 9. *Blessed are the peacemakers, saith he, for they shall be call'd the children of God.* Gods children ought to be peaceful, of a mild spirit, innocent in their discourse, in affection united, inviolably fastned to each other by the links of unanimity. This accord was in the Apostles time. So the new nation of believers kept the commandments of the Lord, and held fast their mutual charity; for a testimony of which this Scripture may be alleg'd:

Acts 4. 32. *And the multitude of them that believed were of one*

one heart and of one soul. And again: *These all* (i.e. Act. I. 14. the Apostles) *continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.* And therefore they could pray effectually, and be confidently assured of obtaining what they askt of Gods mercy.

But unanimity is decreas'd to that low degree among us, that the bounty of charitable giving is contracted. They sold houses and lands then, and being mindful only of laying up treasures in heaven for themselves, they layd down the several prices for which their goods were sold at the Apostles feet, to be distributed by them among the poor according as their necessities required. But alas, now a-days we give not the tithe of our estate, and when the Lord calls to sell, we are upon the buying and encreasing hand. So much hath the vigour of Faith witherd and decay'd; so much hath the healthy constitution of Believers languish'd. And therefore the Lord with relation to our times saith in the Gospel: *When*

The state of the Church declining in its primitive zeal and purity.

the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth? We see that accomplish'd which he foretold. In the fear of God, in the Law of righteousness, in all our actions, we are most un-

Luke 18. 8.

faithful. No man bears in mind the terrors of the Lord, his wrath and future judgement ; the vengeance he will take on unbelievers , and the eternal torments to which they are consign'd. Which are such as would terrify our consciences if we did believe them, but therefore we disregard because of incredulity: If we did believe them, we should avoid, and avoiding should escape them. Let us rouse up our selves, my dearest Brethren, as much as it is possible, and throwing off our old sloth and sleepiness, let us be watchful to observe and perform the Lord's precepts. Let us be such as he hath commanded us to be, saying: *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and you your selves like men who wait for the Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom when the Lord comes he shall find watching.* We ought to be ready, least the day of our departure find us unprepar'd and engag'd. Let our light so shine in our good works, that it may lead us out of the dark night of this world, to the light and brightness of eternal day. Let us carefully and vigilantly expect the sudden coming of our Lord, that when he shall knock, our

Luk. 12.35,
36, and 37.

our faith may be found waking to receive the reward of her watchfulness. If these duties are observ'd, if these admonitions and precepts are obey'd; we shall not be taken sleeping by the deceits of the Devil, but as vigilant servants of Christ in his Kingdom, shall reign with him.

AN ADVERTISEMENT.

WHereas in the sixth page of this Treatise there is omitted the mention of *Primacy being given to S. Peter* ; and that *there was to be one Chair, the which is his* ; as also that *the Church was founded thereupon* : words seeming to justify the pretensions of the See of Rome ; all which appear every where in the late editions of this Author, and as such are cited by others, and therefore may be suggested to have bin left out by sinister practice, and to be a falsification of the Text: the Reader is therefore desired to take notice, that the said passages are not to be found in the ancient Manuscript copies, nor in the old Editions, that of Spire, that without name, or time, or place of the impression, nor that of Rembolt, those of Erasmus, that of Morellius, and onward to Manutius and Pamelius ; whereby it manifestly appears that the aforesaid insertions are a forgery, suitable to diverse others, which the patrons of the Roman omnipotence have attempted to impose upon the world ; and that the omission is so far from being a falsification, that tis the
 doing

doing justice to the genuine reading: which thing Rigaltius in his commentary ingeniously acknowledges, tho he had not courage to restore the Text.

Indeed it had bin a great shortness of understanding in S. Cyprian, if in the same breath wherein he declar'd that *all Bishops* of the whole Christian Church, *preside therein with parity of power and honour*; he should in contradiction thereto declare, that the whole Church was subjected to, and founded upon the primacy of the one Chair of S. Peter. And moreover the said Father, who in his practice was known to have resisted Pope Stephen, and to have stood his excommunication: and oppos'd Pope Cornelius, tho his friend, in the business of an appeal to Rome; would have bin utterly inexcusable and self-condemn'd, if in his writings he had taught, that there was a Supremacy over all Churches and Persons, in the Roman Church.

Would to God those men who make large boasts of Antiquity and Fathers on the one part, and those on the other side who cry out for a Reformation according to the primitive platform; would diligently read the holy Fathers

thers and Writers of the first ages of the Church, particularly S. Cyprian; which if they did, it would be impossible for them to continue their opinions, and be either Papists or Separatists.

F I N I S.

